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RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 1914
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RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 6464
RHMFISS/FBI WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 001411

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SUBJECT: IDP UPDATE: MOI DECLARES SWAT SECURE, DEBIT CARDS
DISTRIBUTED TO DISPLACED FAMILIES

REF: ISLAMABAD 1374

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary. On June 24, Minister of Interior Rehman Malik announced that Swat and Malakand division were now secure from terrorists and IDPs could return home once the infrastructure was restored. Many displaced families living in IDP camps, particularly those from Buner, are beginning to return to their homes. GOP officials and UN organizations are developing a strategy to aid the return of displaced families. The GOP also has begun the extensive program of distributing PKR 25,000 (312 USD) in a debit card to each registered displaced family. End Summary.

Terrorists Flushed from Malakand; IDPs Returning

¶2. (U) Addressing the National Assembly on June 24, Interior Minister Rehman Malik said Pakistani security forces have flushed all terrorists from Swat and Malakand, and now have secured the areas. Malik explained that the IDPs would be returning to their homes once the infrastructure in the insurgency-hit areas was restored. According to Malik, 1592 terrorists had been killed in the operation, while 138 Army personnel had lost their lives.

¶3. (SBU) According to the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) Emergency Response Unit (ERU), 540 families from IDP camps have already returned to Malakand Division, primarily to Buner. NWFP Information Minister Iftikhar Hussein confirmed to press that many IDPs are returning to their homes, but the provincial government would not/not set a deadline for the return and rehabilitation of IDPs. According to Pakistan press, some IDP families from Jalozai camp are demanding that government representatives visit Buner and other areas in Malakand to assess the safety, before they themselves are willing to return home.

Transportation for Return

¶4. (C) In a recent "policy and strategic meeting," government authorities, including the NWFP Chief Secretary and Lt. General Nadeem's chief of staff, told UN and ICRC officials that all displaced could now return to Swat and Buner. The Chief Secretary was interested in arranging some 1,200 trucks/day to facilitate return. The UNHCR Assistant

Representative stressed that people will return when they believe it is safe to do so. He also suggested the establishment of a shuttle service of humanitarian buses which would permit people to travel back home temporarily to assess conditions and tend to personal business before actually returning. Discussions on this issue are ongoing.

Debit Card Distribution

¶5. (U) As of June 19, Pakistan's National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has distributed over 35,000 debit cards with the GOP's promised PKR 25,000 (312 USD) to displaced families. During the week of June 21, NADRA began handing out the cards in Swabi to IDPs from Buner. Cards were distributed to 200 and 300 families on the first and second days respectively and to 8000 on the third. Displaced people streamed back from Buner to pick up the cards.

¶6. (SBU) UNHCR indicated that NADRA is distributing debit cards to all registered displaced, including both Swatis and Bajauris in Jalojai camp. (Note: Roughly 1400 new IDPs, primarily from Swat, but also from Buner, Dir, and elsewhere, have been arriving daily to Jalojai.) The displaced in Punjab and Sindh will be the last to receive cards. NADRA plans to provide cards to 80 percent of the verified, registered displaced by July 15.

Non-Food Item Distribution

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¶7. (SBU) On June 20, UNHCR began mass distribution of non-food items (NFI) to the displaced outside of camps in Nowshera and Charsadda. UNHCR currently has an NFI pipeline that will permit ongoing distribution to 20,000 displaced families per week. In addition to the kits already distributed in the first week, UNHCR has 30,000 kits prepared and warehouses full of NFIs. It is also maintaining a reserve for the Waziristan displaced. UNHCR Geneva has increased UNHCR Pakistan's spending authority by USD 20 million.

Assistance in Camps

¶8. (SBU) Cash-for-work programs continue to facilitate necessary repairs and modifications in internally displaced person (IDP) camps in NWFP. USAID/Pakistan reported completion of drainage systems for 344 tents and the construction of 416 culturally appropriate purdah walls in Jalojai Camp in Nowshera District, collectively benefiting more than 6000 individuals. In addition, through vocation training in camps, displaced individuals-- particularly women-- continue to acquire new skills to improve potential for livelihood recovery and increase earning opportunities.

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Funding

¶9. (U) In a meeting with the USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team, the director of InterAction noted a general misunderstanding among U.N. cluster members, indicating that members believed that the clusters serve as a funding mechanism. According to the InterAction director, the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) is the only donor that has utilized the U.N. cluster system as a donor mechanism in Pakistan during the current response. The director emphasized that lack of funding through the cluster mechanism does not constitute a general lack of funding. The director noted that, from the NGO perspective, although several donors have not provided adequate assistance, NGOs continue to express satisfaction with the rapid funding from the USG.

PATTERSON